

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus for making a granola or snack-food product, comprising:-

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a mixing station, for mixing of a binder solution with ingredients for the snack-food product;

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a forming station, for forming of a mixture of ingredients plus binder into snack-food product precursors, said forming taking place at elevated temperature;

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first transfer means for transfer of the mixture from the mixing station to the forming station;

a cooling station at which snack-food product precursors formed in the forming station are allowed to cool to a temperature at which the binder sets; and

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second transfer means for transfer of the formed snack-food product precursors from the forming station to the cooling station.

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2. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein the mixing station is for receipt, batch-wise or continuously, of liquid binder from binder preparation apparatus and for receipt of dried ingredients from ingredients preparation apparatus.

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3. The apparatus of Claim 2 wherein the binder preparation apparatus includes a binder blending station for blending of binder components, such as water and sugar, and a heating station for heating of the binder components to reduce its water content prior to delivery to the mixing

station.

4. The apparatus of Claim 2 wherein the ingredients preparation
apparatus comprises a dosing station, at which ingredients can be dosed
5 with oil and other optional liquid components, and a baking station, at
which the dosed ingredients can be baked prior to delivery to the mixing
station.

5. The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising a packing station and
10 means for transfer of cooled snack-food product from the cooling station to
the packing station.

6. A granola or snack-food product obtained by a method comprising:-
15 a. at elevated temperature, mixing ingredients for the product
with liquid binder to obtain a formable mixture, wherein the
binder is liquid at elevated temperature and sets when cooled
to room temperature;
20 b. at elevated temperature, whilst the binder is still liquid,
forming the mixture into product precursor; and
c. cooling the precursor to set the binder, thereby obtaining the
snack-food product.

25 7. A granola or snack-food product obtained by a method comprising:-
obtaining, at elevated temperature, a liquid form of a binder;
combining ingredients for the product with the liquid form of the
30 binder to obtain a mixture of the ingredients plus binder;

moulding or otherwise forming the mixture or a portion of the mixture into one or more product precursors; and

allowing the binder to cool to a reduced temperature;

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wherein the binder is in a liquid state at the elevated temperature and sets upon cooling to the reduced temperature into a solid state which is substantially dry and non-sticky to the touch.

10 8. A method of making a granola or snack-food product, comprising:-

a. mixing ingredients for said granola or snack-food product with a super saturated sugar solution to obtain a formable mixture, wherein the mixing is carried out at an elevated temperature and the super-saturated sugar solution is liquid at said elevated temperature and the super-saturated sugar solution sets when cooled to room temperature;

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b. forming the mixture into product precursor, wherein the forming is carried out at elevated temperature and whilst the super-saturated sugar solution is still liquid; and

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c. cooling the precursor to set the super-saturated sugar solution, thereby obtaining the snack-food product.

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9. A method of making a food product selected from the group consisting of a snackbar, a cookie and a breakfast cereal, comprising:-

30 a. mixing ingredients selected from the group consisting of nuts, fruit, dried fruit, cereals, and cereal products with a super saturated sugar solution, said super-saturated sugar solution

having a solids content of about 98% by weight, to obtain a formable mixture, wherein the mixing is carried out at a temperature of at least 100 degrees C and the super-saturated sugar solution is liquid at said temperature and the super-saturated sugar solution sets when cooled to a temperature of about 25 degrees C;

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- b. forming the mixture into product precursor, wherein the forming is carried out at a temperature of at least 100 degrees C and whilst the super-saturated sugar solution is still liquid; and cooling the precursor to set the super-saturated sugar solution, thereby obtaining the snack-food product.

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